

# MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES

Joshua 24:14-28

**INTRODUCTION:** There is an appropriate message for this time of year (graduation) for all of us will have to make decisions in our lives. We make decisions every day but many are now making life-changing decisions about the future. If we never learn how to make the right decisions, then we will go through life unhappy, uncertain, and wondering what went wrong. I wish someone had spoken to me a long time ago about making the right choices. How do you make the right choices. I believe God's Word has all the answers and the principles we need. There was someone many years ago that knew how to make the right choices and he was found making a decision in Joshua 24:14-15. You know who it is and you may remember how he said it when he talked about serving the Lord, "...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua made a decision and he made the right decision.

So, how did he make that right decision? Right here in these two verses we find four principles that will help us make the right choices in every area of life.

All of us have made a wrong choice or two in the past. You may disagree with that but I'll disagree with that disagreement! Let's be honest; we've all made some bad decisions in the past. I can remember several instances where I was going to make a million dollars--wrong choice. All I had to do was to look at the Bible for it tells us not to get involved in get-rich-quick schemes. We tend to try to cover our bad decisions up

or we try to make the results come out right even though we have made a bad choice. What we need to do is to admit that we made a mistake and ask the Lord to teach us how to make the right choices from now on. And that is what the Lord does in His Word.

The overwhelming burden of many decisions causes some folks to say, "I'm not going to make a decision." But they just made one. And it could be a bad one. Too many people quit everything because of this burden; they quit life, they are only existing. And some people even quit physical life. They continue to make the wrong choices so they quit making choices all together and a lot of young people are right there. That's why we have seen so many suicides. They have failed so many times in making the right decision that they decide to never make another decision and their last decision is a fatal one. We need to make the right choices.

God has given us some principles through the life of His servant Joshua that we must always apply.

Always choose:

## **I. THE SPIRITUAL OVER THE CARNAL (v.14)**

Joshua did this. Matt.6:33 says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The context of that verse is "priorities" and what was first in these folks lives and what choices they were making. Many people choose the carnal, the physical, the clothing, the food, the shelter, or anything that is not spiritual. This doesn't mean you can't have some material things, but it does mean that if it comes to a decision

between the spiritual and the carnal, the right choice is the spiritual.

Compare II Cor.10:4, "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)" and verse 5, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;". I have knocked on a lot of doors to invite people to come to church and every now and then you'll run across someone who says, "Yes, we are Christians and need to get back in church because we just moved into town and as soon as we get settled and unpacked we are going to be there." Some of these people are honest and do want to get in church but they have been getting unpacked for years.

The reason many Christians are unhappy is because they fail to apply this principle.

## **II. THE ETERNAL OVER THE TEMPORAL (vv.14,17)**

Joshua chose to serve the eternal God rather than have the pleasures of sin for a season (like his predecessor Moses). Read Matt.16:21-26 where Jesus told Peter that he cared not about the things of God but only the things of men. Jesus went on to say that the soul of man was more important than gaining the whole world. That is hard for a worldly-minded person to understand. We are so interested in what we can get out of life right now that we forget there is an eternity out there much longer than the here and now. But making the right choices takes a heavenly-minded person.

Temporal decisions are just that--temporary. I have known men who refused a higher paying job in an area where there was not a good church, just to keep their family in a quality spiritual atmosphere that produces eternal rewards.

Some have trouble making a decision because of the conflict here. One young man said that God wanted him to go to the Mission field but he knew he could make more money as a lawyer. True, but that's the wrong choice. Money is temporary, but God's will is eternal. As a lawyer you may get some folks out of jail, but wouldn't it be better as a Missionary to get some folks out of hell?

### **III. GOD'S WILL OVER MAN'S WILL (v.15)**

Joshua knew the previous generation in Egypt had succumbed to man made gods and had influenced this present generation. A choice had to be made between God's will and man's will. Joshua made the right choice and led the people to do the same.

When Saul got saved on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:6) he had been making decisions based on what man wanted him to do. The Jewish leaders wanted him to round up all the Christians and put them to death and he was doing just that. Then he met the Lord and after he got saved his first statement was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Everyone who names the name of Jesus should be asking, "Lord, what is it you want me to do?" instead of "Peers, what is it you want me to do?" We should be more interested in pleasing God than our peers.

God's will never goes against His Word. It doesn't matter how man rationalizes something, if it goes against God's Word, it is wrong. It is the wrong choice. Don't be influenced when you know God's will. Jesus said in John 8:29, "...for I do always those things that please him." And God will reveal the decision that pleases Him (Psalm 32:8), but sometimes He is the last one we ask. He is the only one we need to please so He ought to be the first one we ask.

#### **IV. COMMITMENT OVER CONVENIENCE (vv.19-23)**

Joshua implied in verse 19 that the people couldn't serve the Lord because it wouldn't be convenient for them. God is too holy for your lifestyle! You see there is a cost in really serving the Lord. But we need to make decisions based on our commitment to the Lord and His Word rather than whether or not it is convenient to obey.

Rivers are crooked because they take the path of least resistance. That's why a lot of Christians are crooked in their spirituality, because they take the path of least resistance instead of standing up straight and saying, "I'm going by the Book."

**CONCLUSION:** My dad helped start some youth camps in his younger days. Before long there were some worldly people who wanted to throw out some of the Biblical standards that the camps were founded upon. Dad took a stand and others followed but not for long. Several months later, when dad wasn't there, they voted out some rules of modesty and clean living. Dad asked one of his friends why he didn't speak up. The preacher said, "Who am I?" Dad said, "It doesn't matter who you are; what matters is who you

stand for." Dad went out and bought his own youth camp which to this day stands on the principles of God's holy Word.

Making the right choices is not difficult when we follow God's Biblical principles. Always choose the Spiritual over the carnal, the eternal over the temporal, God's will over man's, and commitment over convenience. Oh, how we need more Christians making the right choices.